

Personal Protective Equipment Policy for Research Laboratories and Support Facilities

The University of South Carolina is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff faculty and anyone who is permitted to work in or visit our laboratories. In support of this commitment, the University provides personal protective equipment (PPE) and enforces a PPE policy to protect employees, students and visitors from exposure to hazardous materials, equipment and processes, used or stored in our research laboratories and support facilities.

1. **Who is required to follow this policy:** All staff, faculty, students and volunteers working in a USC research laboratory and all visitors permitted to visit USC research laboratories.
2. **Areas covered:** Research laboratories, equipment rooms, chemical storage areas and other support facilities where hazardous materials are used and/or stored.
3. **Responsibilities:** The Principal Investigator or Instructor in charge of the laboratory or support facility is responsible for the enforcement of this policy.
 - 3.1 The Principal Investigator will ensure that required PPEs are provided to laboratory employees.
 - 3.2 All personnel entering a laboratory and participating in laboratory activities are responsible for wearing required PPEs.
 - 3.3 All non-employee students participating in laboratory activities are responsible for providing and wearing required PPEs.
 - 3.4 All visitors entering the laboratory are responsible for wearing required PPE provided by the host laboratory.
4. **Minimum protection to enter a laboratory:** fully closed shoes, clothing that provides maximum and reasonable skin coverage (i.e. full-length pants or skirt and shirt/tops with sleeves).
5. **When working with very dilute concentration of hazardous chemicals:** nitrile gloves, safety glasses and a barrier lab coat.
6. **When working with concentrated corrosive chemicals:** safety goggles, barrier lab coat, gloves specifically resistant to substance/s being handled.
7. **When working with flammable and/or pyrophoric chemicals:** safety goggles, flame-resistant (FR) lab coat, gloves specifically resistant to substance/s being handled.
8. **When working with corrosive and flammable chemicals:** safety goggles, flame-resistant barrier (FRCP) lab coat, gloves specifically resistant to substance/s being handled.
9. **If there is potential for splash of diluted hazardous chemicals:** PPE in #5 plus face shield over safety goggles.



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10. **If there is potential for splash of concentrated form of hazardous chemicals:** PPE in #6 plus face shield over safety goggles and chemical-resistant apron over lab coat.
11. **For specific highly hazardous substances (HHS) and operations,** a comprehensive hazard and risk assessment must be conducted to identify specific PPE required. Example:
 - 11.1 *Transferring liquid nitrogen or retrieving samples from liquid-nitrogen-filled dewar:* barrier lab coat, face shield over safety goggles, cryogen gloves
 - 11.2 *Working with concentrated HF:* barrier lab coat, Tyvek suit over lab coat, tightly fitting safety goggles, face shield over safety goggles, chloroprene gloves (at least 0.6 mm thick), acid resistant booties over shoes
 - 11.3 *Retrieving items from an autoclave:* barrier lab coat, face shield over safety goggles, autoclave gloves
 - 11.4 *Working with or around laser:* required PPE based on other hazardous materials handled plus laser safety goggles
12. **Non-conformation to this policy-** The Principal Investigator, class Instructor, or any of their appointed lab manager or representative and USC safety personnel reserves the right to deny access to the laboratory for anyone who does not conform to this policy.
13. **Lab-specific PPE policy** – the Principal Investigator or class Instructor reserves the right to enforce a more stringent PPE policy than what is described in this document.